



THE DRAMA;

OR,

THEATRICAL

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MR. G. SMITH.

“ A right singing man.”

JOHN HEYWOOD's “ *Four P's*.”

“ He will sing the song that pleaseth you.”

SHAKSPEARE.

Mr. G. SMITH was born in the city of London, some time in December of the year 1777. His father was a respectable tradesman, and report says in tolerable circumstances, though we have not heard in what particular line of business he was engaged.

The life of this actor is characterized by none of those remarkable events, which form the chief attraction of biography. From his earliest outset to the present hour, he seems to have gone on in one calm, uninterrupted course, without having once experienced either the buffets or the smiles of fortune. Little more, therefore, can be expected than a dry detail of birth, parentage, and education. Any attempts to embellish a life so barren of events, must be idle and abortive. The high colour of language which is well calculated to describe the splendour of a palace, would be

ludicrous and affected, when applied to the simplicity of a cottage.

He went to school at an early age, where he does not appear to have attracted any particular attention, nor indeed could much be expected from his time of life. Whatever good might have finally resulted from education, was entirely frustrated by his father, who, finding his son blessed with a tolerable voice, determined to turn that talent to account. He accordingly took him away from school at the early age of eleven, and placed him in St. Paul's choir, under the care of a Mr. HUDSON.

In this situation he remained till his fourteenth year, when his voice broke, and he became utterly unfit for the choir—Although this event might have been expected, it seems to have made a considerable impression on his father's mind, who began to fear that he was utterly disqualified for a singer. With this idea, he relinquished his first hope, and apprenticed him to a Mr. PEACOCK, a law-stationer of some eminence in the trade. It may be easily imagined that the fetters of business sat but awkwardly on a boy, who had been so long accustomed to a life of industrious idleness, in which the highest labour was but pleasure. Indeed, so little was it to his taste, that he quitted it entirely, when the time of his apprenticeship had expired.

He now contrived to procure an engagement as a singer at Vauxhall, where he remained for three seasons. It should seem that he gave general satisfaction, for at the end of this period, he received a liberal offer from Mr. JONES, the proprietor of the Circus. This proposal was of course accepted, and for three years he continued the hero of CROSS's pantomime dramas.

From hence Mr. SMITH travelled to Sadler's Wells, and made his first appearance on that stage in the Easter of 1803. The part selected for this occasion was *Ralph*, in "*Edward and Susan*," a burletta, long since forgotten.

His success must have satisfied the proprietors, for from that time, till the year 1805, he kept his rank in the theatre, and gave to many of DIBDIN's songs a popularity which they scarcely merited.

About two years after, Mr. CHARLES DIBDIN entered into a theatrical speculation at Dublin, and agreed to rent

ASTLEY's theatre, in Peter-street. In consequence of this scheme, he engaged Mr. SMITH, and many others of the Sadler's Wells company, to go with him to Ireland, but the success was by no means equal to the expectations of the proprietors. His plan failed, and after an indifferent season, he abandoned it altogether.

This journey, however, was not without profit to Mr. SMITH. His style of singing appears to have rendered him a favourite with the public of Ireland, for soon after his arrival he was employed as a bass-singer in the Cathedral, and had the honour of sustaining a part in the *Dettingen Te Deum*, performed before the Lord Lieutenant, in consequence of Lord NELSON's victory at Trafalgar.

His growing reputation induced Mr. JONES of the theatre royal, in Crow-street, to make him a most advantageous offer; but anxiety to revisit his family and friends made him reject the proposal, and he returned to his old engagement at the Wells, where he remained till the summer of 1808.

His first appearance in the Drury-lane company was on the 10th of October, 1807, in the character of *Hodge* in "*Love in a Village*." For two years he continued on this stage, with increasing success. In the opera of "*Kais*," he performed so much to the general satisfaction, that the managers were happy to engage him for five years at an advanced salary. In the "*Circassian Bride*," too, he added considerably to his fame and reputation; when, unfortunately, the theatre was destroyed, and he joined, with many others, ARNOLD's company at the Lyceum. From this time he has increased in favour with the public. His voice is wonderfully deep and harmonious.

FEMALE ACTORS.

[*Vide Vol. I. p. 61. 281. Vol. II. 234.*]

It is well known that in the time of SHAKSPEARE, and for many years afterwards, female characters were represented solely by boys or young men. NASH, in a

pamphlet published in 1592, speaking in defence of the English stage, *boasts* that the players of his time, 'were not as the players beyond sea, a sort of squinting bawdie Comedians, that have whores and common courtizans to play women's parts.'"(1) What NASHE considered as an high eulogy on his country, PRYNNE has made one of his principal charges against the English stage; having employed several of the pages in his bulky volume, and quoted many hundred authorities to prove "that those playes wherein any men act women's parts in women's apparell, must needs be sinful, yea, abominable unto Christians."(2) The grand basis of his argument, is a text in scripture; *Deuteronomy* XXII. 5. "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment:" a precept which Sir RICHARD BAKER has justly remarked, is no part of the moral law, and ought not to be understood literally. "Where (says SIR RICHARD) finds he this precept? even in the same place where he finds also that we must not wear cloaths of linsey-woolsey; and seeing we lawfully now wear cloaths of linsey-woolsey, why may it not be as lawful for men to put on women's garments?"(3.)

It may, perhaps, be supposed, that PRYNNE, having thus vehemently inveighed against men's representing female characters on the stage, would not have been averse to the introduction of women in the scene; but sinful as this zealot thought it in *men*, to assume the garments of the other sex, he considered it as not less abominable in *women* to tread the stage in their own proper dress. For he informs us "that some French women, or *monsters* rather, in Michaelmas Term, 1627, attempted to act a French play at the play-house in Blackfriars," and which he represents as "a *whorish attempt*."(4)

(1) *Pierce Pennilesse, his supplication of the devil*, 4to. 1592.

(2) *Histriomastix*, 4to. 1633. p. 179.

(3) *Theatrum Triumphans*, 8vo. 1670. p. 16.

(4) He there calls it only an *attempt*, but in a former page (215) he says "they have now their female players in Italy, and other foreign parts, as they had such French

Soon after the period he speaks of, a regular French Theatre was established in London, where without doubt women acted. They had long before appeared on the Italian as well as the French stage. When CORYATE was at Venice, [July, 1608,] he tells us he was at one of their play-houses, and saw a Comedy acted. "The house (he adds) is very beggarly and base, in comparison of our stately play-houses in England; neither can their actors compare with us for apparrell, shewes, and musicke; here I observed certaine actresses that I never saw before; though I have heard that they sometimes used in London; and they performed with as good grace, action, gesture, and whatsoever convenient for a player, as ever I saw any masculine actors."(1)

women actors in a play not long since personated in Blackfriars playhouse, to which *there was great resort.*" In the margin he adds—"in Michaelmas, 1629"—His account is confirmed by Sir HENRY HERBERTS Office Book.

PRYNNE, in conformity to the absurd notions which have been stated in the text, inserted in his index these words:—"Women Actors notorious whores:" by which he so highly offended the King and Queen, that he was tried in the Star Chamber, and sentenced to be imprisoned for life, fined 5000*l.*, expelled Lincoln's Inn, disbarred, and disqualified to practice the law, degraded of his degree in the University, to be set on the pillory, his ears cut off, and his book burnt by the common hangman, "which rigorous sentence (says WHITELOCKE) was as rigorously executed."

In p. 708, of PRYNNE's book, is the following note, the insertion of which probably incensed their Majesties, who often performed in the Court-masques, not less than what has been already mentioned:—

"It is *infamous* in this author's judgment [DION CASSIUS.] for Emperors or persons of quality, to *dance upon a stage, or act a play.*"

(1) CORYATE's *Crudities*, 4to. 1611. p. 247. I have found no ground for this writer's assertion, that female performers had appeared on the English stage before he wrote.

The practice of men's performing the parts of women in the scene, is of the highest antiquity. On the Grecian stage, no woman certainly ever *acted*. From PLUTARCH's life of PHOCION, we learn that in his time (about B. C. 318,) the performance of a tragedy at Athens, was interrupted for some time by one of the actors, who was to personate a *Queen*, refusing to come on the stage, because he had not a suitable mask and dress, and a train of attendants richly habited; and DEMOSTHENES, in one of his orations, mentions THEODORUS and ARISTODEMUS, as having often represented the *Antigone* of SOPHOCLES. This fact is also ascertained by an actor preserved by AULUS GELLUS. A very celebrated actor, whose name was POLUS, was appointed to perform the part of *Electra*, in SOPHOCLES's play; who in the progress of the play, appears with an urn in her hands, containing as she supposes the ashes of *Orestes*. The actor having been some time before deprived by death of a beloved son, to indulge his grief, as it should seem, procured the urn which contained the ashes of his child to be brought from his tomb; which affected him so much, that when he appeared with it on the scene, he embraced it with unfeigned sorrow and burst into tears.

That on the Roman stage also, female parts were represented by men in tragedy, is ascertained by one of CICERO's letters to ATTICUS, in which he speaks of ANTIPHO,(1) who performed the part of *Andromache*; and by a passage in HORACE, who informs us, that FUSIUS PHOCÆUS being to perform the part of *Ilione*, the wife of *Polymnestor*, in a tragedy written either by ACCIUS or PACURIUS, and being in the course of the play to be awakened out of sleep by the cries of the shade of *Polydorus*, got so drunk, that he fell into a real and profound sleep, from which no noise could awake him.

HORACE, indeed, mentions a female performer, called ARBUSCULA, but as we find from his own authority, that men personated women on the Roman stage, she probably was only an *emboliaria*, who performed in the interludes and dances exhibited between the acts, and at the end of

(1) *Epistol, ad. Atticum. Lib. IV. c. XV.*

the play. SERVIUS calls her *Mima*, but that may mean nothing more than one who acted in the *mimes*, or danced in the pantomime dances; and this seems the more probable from the manner in which she is mentioned by CICERO, from whom we learn that the part of *Andromache* was performed by a male actor on that very day when ARBUSCULA exhibited with the highest applause.

The same practice prevailed in the time of the Emperors, for in the list of parts which NERO, with a preposterous ambition, acted in the public theatre, we find that of *Canace*, who was represented in labour on the stage.

In the interludes exhibited between the acts, undoubtedly women appeared. The elder PLINY informs us that a female named LUCCEIA acted in these interludes for 100 and GALERIA COPIOLA for above 90 years.(1)—Eunuchs also sometimes represented women on the Roman stage, as they do at this day in Italy, for we find that SPORUS, who made so conspicuous a figure in NERO's time, being appointed in the year 70 [U. C. 823.] to personate a nymph, who in an interlude, exhibited before VITELLIVS, was to be carried off by a ravisher, rather than endure the indignity of wearing a female dress on the stage, put himself to death; a singular end for one, who about 10 years before been publicly espoused to NERO in the Hymeneal veil, and had been carried through the streets of Rome by the side of that monster in the imperial robes of the Empresses, ornamented with a profusion of jewels.


Thus ancient was the usage, which, though not adopted in the neighbouring countries of France and Italy, prevailed in England from the infancy of the stage. The prejudice against women appearing on the scene, continued so strong, that until near the time of the restoration, boys constantly performed female characters; and strange as it may now appear, the old practice was not deserted without many apologies for the *indecorum* of the novel usage. In 1659, or 1660, in imitation of foreign Theatres, women were first introduced on the stage. In 1656 indeed, Mrs. COLEMAN, the wife of Mr. EDWARD COLEMAN, represented *Ianthe*, in the first part of D'AVENANT's "*Siege of*

(1) Vide Vol. IV. p. 344.

Rhodes," but the little she had to say was spoken in recitative. The first woman that appeared in any regular drama on a public stage, performed the part of *Desdemona*; but who the lady was I am unable to ascertain. The play of "*Othello*," is enumerated by DOWNE's as one of the stock plays of the King's Company on their opening their Theatre, in April, 1663, and it appears from a paper found with Sir HENRY HERBERTS Office Book, and indorsed by him, that it was one of the stock plays of the same Company from the time they began to play without a patent at the *Red Bull*, in St. John-street. Mrs. HUGHES performed the part of *Desdemona*, in 1663, when the Company removed to Drury Lane, and obtained the title of "*King's Servants*," but whether she performed with them while they played at the *Red Bull* or in Vere-street near Clare-market, has not been ascertained. Perhaps Mrs. SAUNDERSON made her first essay there, though she afterwards was enlisted in D'AVENANT's company. The received tradition is, that she was the first English actress.

It is certain, however, that for some time after the restoration, men also acted female parts; and KYNASTON even after women had assumed their proper rank on the stage, was not only endured but admired, if we may believe a contemporary writer, who assures us "that being then very young, he made a complete stage beauty, performing his parts so well (particularly *Arthiope* and *Aglaure*,) that it has since been disputable among the judicious, whether any woman that succeeded him, touched the audience so sensibly as he.

In D'AVENANT's Company, the first actress that appeared, was probably Mrs. SAUNDERSON, who performed *Ianthe* in "*The Siege of Rhodes*," on the opening of his new Theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, in April, 1662. It does not appear from DOWNE's account, that while D'AVENANT's Company performed at the Cock Pit, in Drury Lane, during the years 1659, 1660, and 1661, they had any female performer among them, or that *Othello* was acted by them at that period.



 DRAMATIC FRAGMENTA.

“A nosegaie not lacking flowers fresh,
 To you I now do send—
 Desiring you to looke thereon,
 When that you may intend.”

CLEM. ROBINSON'S "*Handefull of Pleasaunt
 Delites*," 1581.

146.—PERSEUS.

There are two dramatic pieces of this name: the first was performed at *Drury Lane* in 1728, the other at *Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre* in 1730. One of them appears to have been outrageously indecent, and is severely commented on in "*The Grub-street Journal*," April 8, 1731. Its title is "*Perseus and Andromeda, with the Rape of Columbine: or, the Flying Lovers, in five Interludes, three serious and two comic. The serious composed by Monsieur ROGER, the comic by JOHN WEAVER, dancing-masters.*" The following is the passage in "*The Grub-street Journal*:"

"It should be known by posterity, that, in the year 1730, the simplicity and innocence of our women were at such a pitch, that they could appear for threescore nights together at a bawdy entertainment, in which the most lascivious acts, nearly tending to copulation itself, were repeatedly represented, and of which they were so entirely ignorant and unexperienced that they could not guess what it meant, nor were so much as put to the expense of a blush."

147.—PRIVATE CHARACTERS OF PLAYERS.

The private character of an author or a player has much to do with our regard for his writing or acting. We love STEELE far more than ADDISON. How sincerely was the death of Mrs. JORDAN regretted, not so much on account of the loss the stage had sustained, as because her disposition was generally believed to be amiable and generous. There are one or two living actresses, the news of

whose deaths will be heard with much more composure, though possibly they are in no—way her inferiors—*professionally*.

148.—MR. MATHEWS.

Mr. MATHEWS once applied to the late TATE WILKINSON for an engagement, offering himself as a low comedian. WILKINSON, looking at his stature, replied, “LOW comedian?”—“Aye, Sir,” answered he, “low comedian.” Every one who has seen Mr. MATHEWS must have observed the awkward habit of his mouth when he speaks. TATE, ignorant of this, replied, “that will do, that will do; I see you have some humour, so pray spare your ludicrous faces.”

149.—GARRICK’S LIBRARY.

There is a passage in DIBDIN’S “*Bibliographical Decameron*,” Vol. III. p. 313, relating to this admirable collection, which seems to have attracted little or no attention; yet it involves a charge of so heinous a nature, and preferred in so unequivocal a manner, that every one who feels interested about the memory of ROSCIUS, must naturally be desirous of seeing it cleared from the imputation cast upon it. The passage runs thus:—

“GARRICK had free access to the library at Dulwich College, founded by ALLEYN, and pillaged it without scruple or remorse. He did pretty nearly the same thing with Sir THOMAS HANMER’S library. No wonder, therefore, that the GARRICK collection, now deposited in the British Museum, presents, at once, an object of vexation, envy, and despair to the bibliomaniac.”

The reverend writer, I presume, would not have hazarded so grave a charge without being well convinced of its truth, yet it is to be wished that he had given us his authority for the story. As the matter stands at present, we have merely his simple assertion to induce us to credit it; and, for my own part, until I see better evidence adduced, I shall take the liberty of disbelieving it altogether.

150.—ACTING.

There is no self-delusion so complete and so difficult of cure as the belief which many unfortunate persons entertain that nature has fitted them for the stage. An amusing instance of this was related to me by a friend. A man who squinted dreadfully with one eye, assured him very seriously that he intended to turn tragic actor. After endeavouring to dissuade him from his purpose, and pointing out various obstacles to the plan, without success, he, at last, as an unanswerable objection, exclaimed, "But your eye, Mr. WILKINS, your eye!"—"Oh, Sir, that won't be seen! that won't be seen!" replied the determined aspirant after Thespian honours.

151.—CHRISTOPHER LOWE.

A man of this name was for many years bill distributor to the theatre at Chester, and surpassed in years the manager of that house, Mr. AUSTIN, whose demise is recorded in Vol. I. p. 401. LOWE died in 1801, aged ninety-two. When in his fifteenth year he was afflicted with a severe fever, of which he apparently expired. He was laid out, shrouded, and confined; and nearly three days after his supposed demise, being carried on four men's shoulders to the grave, he suddenly knocked off the lid of the coffin. To the ineffable amazement of the carriers and attendants, on opening it they found honest CHRISTOPHER in a complete state of resuscitation. For many years after he used to amuse and astonish his neighbours and friends with "the wonderful things he saw in his trance."

152.—A SCOTCH BULL.

A party of actors played "*Douglas*" at the Trades' Hall in Glasgow on the 23d July, 1821, *Norval* by a young gentleman of Glasgow. The bills said, that "his histrionic powers had procured him the appellation of the '*Third Roscius*;' " but added, nevertheless, that this was his *first* appearance on *any* stage."

153.—MRS. GARRICK.

A friend was condoling with this lady on the death of

her husband, when she said, " he never was a *husband* to me." The other testifying great surprise at this unexpected declaration, Mrs. G. added, " for during the thirty years we were married he always remained my *lover*."—*Sun*, Oct. 25, 1821.

154.—CATULLUS AND GAY.

Has it ever been remarked, that GAY's song in "*The Beggar's Opera*," "*Virgins are like the fair flower*," is a literal versification of the beautiful "*Carmen Nuptiale*" of CATULLUS?

155.—MANAGER'S BULL.

Among the MSS. sold with KEMBLE's library was a list of the performances at Covent Garden for several seasons during the management of RICH. On the 17th Dec. 1748, the following entry was made:—

" *The Merry Wives of Windsor*," and "*The what d'ye call it?*" by command of the Prince of WALES.—Prince GEORGE, Prince EDWARD, and three more Princesses, were at the house this night."

156.—"THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS."

This comedy, says VICTOR in his "*Letters*," Vol. I. p. 327, was the last blaze of STEELE's glory. I sat by him in BURTON's box at the first performance: all the performers charmed him but GRIFFIN in the character of *Cimberton*. The comedy was received with universal applause; and his royal patron, to whom it was dedicated, (GEO. I.) sent the author a present of 500*l*. Whilst the play was in rehearsal, that surly old critic, DENNIS, published a scurrilous pamphlet to prejudice the public against it; and, amongst other scandalous things, he called Sir RICHARD, in his preface, "*An Irish Twopenny Author*," alluding to the *Tatlers* and *Spectators*. This base vulgar treatment enraged me, rashly, to enter the lists, as you have seen a very young puppy bark at, and nibble the heels of an old mastiff. Sir RICHARD was pleased with the attempt, and only insisted that his young hero should print his name in front of the epistle, as it was directed to him. This was done, and the impression was sold off with the comedy.

157.—LISTON.

About five or six years ago the following letter was addressed, by this son of MOMUS, to the editor of a morning paper, on the occasion of his benefit.

MR. LISTON TO THE EDITOR.

(ADVERTISEMENT.)

Sir,

My benefit takes place this evening at Covent Garden Theatre, and I doubt not will be splendidly attended. Several parties in the first circle of fashion were made the moment it was announced. I shall perform Fogrum in the "Slave," and Leporello in the "Libertine;" and, in the delineation of those arduous characters, I shall display much feeling and discrimination, together with much taste in my dresses, and elegance in my manner. The audience will be delighted with my exertions, and testify, by rapturous applause, their most decided approbation.

When we consider, in addition to my professional merits, the loveliness of my person, and fascinations of my face, which are only equalled by the amiability of my private character, having never "pinched my children, nor kicked my wife out of bed," there is no doubt but this puff will not be inserted in vain.

I am, Sir,

28, King Street,
June 10, 1817.

Your obedient servant,

J. LISTON.

158.—EPITAPH ON AN ACTOR.

From early youth train'd to the Thespian art,
On life's great stage I've play'd my varied part.
My entrance was auspicious; never boy
In his *début* received more flattering joy:
My first and second acts pass'd smooth away,
Alternately in study and in play.
I then advanced more forward in the scene,
And oft neglect made forfeits intervene:
My passions drew me into tragic scrapes,
And ill-laid plots brought with them dire mishaps.

P

Comic events, however, were not scarce,
 And past dilemmas then became a *farce* :
 Though want of *property* I've often known,
 My *wardrobe slender* never made me groan.
 In various *shapes* not always at my ease,
 I *managed* still to *bustle through the piece* :
 Though wrong *behind the curtain* I might do,
 My inward *prompter* kept me still in *cue*.
 My *drama* now is done, the *last act* o'er,
 My *season* finish'd, I must higher soar ;
 No more *engagements* on the *stage* I'll make,
 Trusting my *benefit* above to take.

Lambeth, Nov. 5.

GLANVILLE.

STANZAS

TO MISS CHESTER.

"Think, think on every smile and glance,
 On all thou hast to charm and move,
 And then forgive my bosom's trance
 And tell me 'tis not sin to love."

THOMAS MOORE.

Fair Being!—Form of loveliness !
 Casket wherein there lies enshrin'd
 The gem whose worth none can express,
 Heaven's brightest gift—a feeling *mind*.
 Why, peerless beauty when the eyes
 Of wondering thousands on thee gaze—
 When countless shouts to greet thee rise—
 Why do I sicken at their praise ?
 'Tis not that I admire thee not—
 Thine excellence who does not feel ?
 'Tis not that I would rudely blot
 Thy hopes with a fanatic's zeal.
 No lady—deem me not so vile,
 May the glad sun-beam of success
 Brightly upon those young hopes smile,
 And ripen them to happiness.

It is—what since 'twere vain to tell,
Untold shall linger in my breast,
Nor from these lips one sound shall swell,
Save what cold friendship might suggest.

I saw thee as the Quaker-maid(1)
In the plain garb of Piety—
But fashion's artificial aid,
Was needed not, sweet girl, by thee.

I mark'd thee when the master-fiend,
The wretch thy young heart deem'd a friend—
His villain will to thee unscreen'd,
I mark'd thy lightning glance descend.

Oh ! who but one whose soul had grown
By oft-repeated villainy—
Insensible and cold as stone,
Had sunk not 'neath its mastery !

Lady—I know full well thy heart
Is free from stain as mountain snow—
The *will* alone could ne'er impart
So strongly indignation's glow.

And when the o'erwhelming consciousness
Of thy lorn state came o'er thy mind ;
What keen yet dignified distress,
In thy pourtrayal did we find !

All lovely girl, 'twere vanity,
Presumption in a lyre like mine—
To deem its humble minstrelsy,
Could give due praise to worth like thine.

The sweetest of the minstrel train,
Although seraphic breathes his lay,
Methinks would find the hope but vain,
Each feeling thou awak'st to say.

(1) *Dinah*, in the "*Young Quaker*."

And tho' I know my humble verse
 Thy fame—thy charms can never swell—
 My heart those charms would still rehearse,
 And bleeds while faltering forth—farewell !
 Mary-le-bone, Oct. 1823. G. J. DE WILDE.

THEATRICAL INQUISITION.

—“ All the world's a stage,
 And all the men and women merely players :
 They have their exits and their entrances,
 And one man in his time plays many parts.”

NEW DRURY LANE THEATRE.

Journal of Performances, with Remarks.

Oct. 23.—Beggar's Opera—Cupid and Folly—Simpson and Co.

24.—School for Scandal—Ibid—Turnpike Gate.

25.—Hamlet—Simpson and Co.

27.—Fazio—CATARACT of the GANGES ; or, the *Rajah's Daughter*. [1st. time.]

This tragedy is from the pen of Mr. MILMAN, and as a poem, ranks among the most celebrated of the modern school. The principal character is that of *Bianca*, (on whom nearly the whole of the interest centres) and perhaps, in the whole range of the tragic drama, there is not one which more effectually awakens our sympathy. The mild and beautiful, but jealous *Florentine*, wrought, even from her very gentleness to the extreme of passion, on discovering that her husband was again the paramour of “ the loose wanton” *Aldabella*, makes the discovery which ends in the execution of *Fazio*, and her own madness and death. The contrast is striking between the opening and the concluding scenes : in the former she is all love and tenderness—“ the mild *Bianca*, the soft fond *Bianca* ;” in the latter, her jealous rage, and afterwards, her mad despair, completely change her, and she is indeed the victim of

passion, but whose gentler nature is only obscured, and not destroyed. Miss O'NEILL, in the character, is yet fresh in our memory. We shall never forget the extraordinary mastery she possessed over her tones, looks, and actions, which begot a calm amid the very whirlwind of her passions, and left her throughout the same gentle and interesting creature. We remember also CHARLES KEMBLE in the character of *Fazio*, and, to our mind, we never saw CHARLES KEMBLE to greater advantage. Mr. YOUNGE was the *Fazio* of this evening, but his performance was certainly of the most meagre and heartless description. But the chief attraction was the re-appearance, after an absence of six years, of an actress of very great merit; whose talent will doubtless prove at the present time a great acquisition to the strength of Drury Lane. Mrs. BUNN supported the character of *Bianca* in a style by no means unworthy of a successor to Miss O'NEILL, and we have no hesitation in asserting, that there is scarcely an actress on the stage who could have excelled her. Through the whole piece her delivery was extremely good, and her conception of the part admirable. In the prison scene, where she parts with *Fazio*, and in the last scene, which, as it is the most difficult, so it was the best, she was greeted by the audience with continued and universal applause. Indeed we have seldom witnessed a more completely successful performance. Mrs. GLOVER sustained the part of *Aldabella*; she may have acted the character, but she certainly did not look it. She is far too much *em bonpoint* to represent the wily mistress of so many hearts; and *Fazio* would have been at least guilty of bad taste to have left the soft and beautiful *Bianca* for the proud and haughty *Marchesa*. Mr. TERRY very ably supported the character of the old miser, *Bartolo*. The whole tragedy was received with high approbation. A grand drama of action and spectacle was afterwards performed for the first time, and the tragedy concluded to the rapturous satisfaction of, we fear, by far the major part of the house for this hour of finery, dash, and spectacle. As to story, this drama is a perfect nondescript; although we will do our best to convey it. Be it known, therefore, that the Jahrejahs, a tribe of Guzerat, in India, not above twenty years ago, carried the tyranny of super-

stitious barbarity as far as it could go, by the uniform murder of all their female children; the contingent inconvenience being obviated by marriage with the daughters of another tribe. How such a horrible custom really originated is doubtful; but those who wish to become acquainted with the best conjectures on the practice, and with the pleasing termination of it, may consult COLONEL WALKER's Report of the happy manner in which British humanity produced its abolishment, not by terror or the sword, but by influence and negotiation. With these interesting facts, however, the present drama has very little to do, the custom alone being made use of. Thus the *Rajah of Guzerat* (YOUNGE) having no son, deceives his subjects by bringing up a daughter, *Zameine* (Miss L. KELLY) as such; which deception being discovered by *Mokarra*, the *Grand Bramin* of the tribe (WALLACK) who has views of usurping the sovereignty. he appeals to the superstitions of the *Jahrejah's*, and drags the disguised girl from the arms of her parent, to atone for the horrible breach of custom by sacrificing her to the idol *Jaggernaut*. In the first place, however, he leads her to the sanctuary of *Brahma*; where he proffers her his love, which changes his sanguinary purpose, so that by obtaining her hand he may reign in her right. The lady, however, rejects the proposal; and the *Bramin*, being a person of quick feeling, after giving her a certain time to recant, consoles himself by going to sleep. A little pantomimic display now follows; for *Jack Robinson* (HARLEY) the servant of a *Colonel Mordaunt* (ARCHER) resident for some reason or other in these "outlandish parts," has obtained access to the sanctuary undiscovered, and being concealed behind the statue of the pagod, comes forward during the *Bramin's* nap, and very nearly effects the fair one's escape, but is ultimately necessitated to leave her behind, and be satisfied with making off himself. This valorous exploit, however, is not altogether fruitless, for he arrives just in the "nick o' time" to inform the *Rajah* (who, with the aid of *Mordaunt* the officer, had induced the *Jahrejah's* to abandon their barbarous custom) that *Mokarra* intended, without a moment's delay, to sacrifice the maid by burning her in the sacred wood of *Himalaya*, near the *Cataract of the*

Ganges. The whole *posse comitatus* of course make the best of their way to the aforesaid romantic and sacred spot, where an engagement ensues between the different parties, which ends in the death of the *Bramin*, delivery of the princess, and abolishment of the barbarous ceremony of burning.

Such are the outlines of the plot, which does infinite credit to Messrs. WALLACK and BARRYMORE, the "getters up," but none at all to the author, Mr. MONCRIEFF; for all its attraction consists in the magnificence of the scenery, the splendid decorations, and, above all, the stud of horses, and car drawn by six additional ones. The extraordinary taste and liberality with which it has been produced, causes it to give the *go-by* to every piece of a similar description, which we have ever witnessed. The concluding scene in particular, is singularly beautiful. The *Cataract* itself, which is a descent of *real water*, from the cistern on the roof, we suppose, occupies the back ground, while the whole of the front presents a burning forest, interspersed with clumps and declivities, in the midst of which the troops engage, horse and foot. The princess, mounted on a steed, makes her escape in the midst of a fire of musquetry, by galloping up the *Cataract*, like Douglas, he who could "ride up a hill perpendicular." Mahrattas, Hindoos, Moguls, and Sepoys, handle their arms in the skirmish, and ride in and out at will. In short, all the circumstances of battle are attempted, until the *Bramin* falls, owing to the pull of a trigger by the plebeian hand of *Jack Robinson*, and the curtain drops amidst tumults of applause! We never remember a piece of this description that has met with similar success. Nightly has the house been crowded to the ceiling by admiring myriads, and such are the sums consequently thrown into the manager's pocket, that he has advertized it for every evening until the forthcoming Christmas novelty throws it into the shade.

28.—Road to Ruin—Ibid.

29.—Wild Oats—Ibid.

30.—Virginius—Ibid.

31.—Macbeth—Ibid.

Nov. 1.—Way to get Married—Ibid.

3.—Winter's Tale—Ibid.

This beautiful play has been considered by many eminent critics to be one of the most effective of SHAKSPEARE'S productions in representation. There are not a few who think its irregularities and departure from the legitimate drama amply redeemed by the beautiful passages with which it abounds; but we shall not attempt to amuse our readers with a dissertation upon its merits and defects with which doubtless they cannot be unacquainted. It was this evening, after an eight years' absence from the stage, produced with great splendour, and the performers to whom the principal characters were allotted being entirely of the higher class, we experienced a great dramatic treat. Mr. MACREADY'S *Leontes* was upon the whole a very effective performance, but not such an one as will unite the universal suffrages of the critics as the observations in the daily papers very clearly evince:—but we are somewhat inclined to differ from them generally, although certainly not in every particular point. Mr. MACREADY'S acting is always marked by such a propriety and correctness, that it should always find a great degree of favour from those gentlemen, although he may not at times possess that warmth of feeling and “flow of soul,” which some *very few* others of the present day possess; still there are some very powerful gleams of genius continually bursting forth in every character which he appears in, and we must confess we feel ourselves somewhat galled at remarks which are at the same time illiberal and unjust. We shall endeavour to enter into some more enlarged observations on Mr. MACREADY'S style of acting at a more convenient opportunity, and in the interim we cannot but observe, that in several of the scenes this evening he exhibited examples of his own peculiar energy, with some fine studies of attitude and deportment which cannot be excelled on the stage. His burst of emotion on recovery of his long-lost *Hermione*, and the whole of his last scene, were most finely conceived and brilliantly executed, and spite of all the “stinging” to which he has lately been subjected, it is a representation that will greatly add to his already high reputation. Mrs. BUNN'S *Hermione* was a sound performance, and her appearance as the *statue* has commanded what it well de-

served, universal admiration. MUNDEN, in his old character of the pleasant rogue *Autolycus*, was as richly humorous as ever. There was some pleasing dancing in the fourth act, and the play was received with great approbation.

4.—She Stoops to Conquer—Ibid.

5.—Winter's Tale—Ibid.

6.—Hypocrite—Ibid.

7.—Winter's Tale—Ibid.

8.—Road to Ruin—Ibid.

10.—Winter's Tale—Ibid.

11.—Provoked Husband—Ibid.

12.—Winter's Tale—Ibid.

13.—Chapter of Accidents—Deaf as a Post—Ibid.

14.—Winter's Tale—Ibid.

15.—Rob Roy—Ibid.

Mr. MACREADY performed the outlaw for the first time at this theatre; it is, perhaps, with the exception of *Virginus*, his very best character, and we make this exception only, because an equal opportunity for the effective display of his powers is not afforded in the former as the latter. The mysterious character of the Scottish outlaw, his resolute intrepidity in danger, and still more his domestic sensibility, the frankness and truth with which he lets out the honest impulses of his native disposition, and the noble pride with which he struggles against "the storms of fate," seem as it were so many traits and characteristics grouped together for the very purpose of concealing the defects and exhibiting the merits of Mr. MACREADY's acting. It was throughout a fine and perfect performance. Mrs. BUNN played *Helen* somewhat too boisterously. Her fine majestic figure, however, is well suited to it, and her attitudes were well chosen and effective. LISTON was the *Baillie*, and Miss POVEY *Diana Vernon*. The latter sang the several beautiful songs with which the part abounds very sweetly. If she does not possess all the gaiety, grace, vivacity, and other attractive qualities, which the poetic mind of Sir W. SCOTT attributes to *Diana*, she is not accountable for the absence of them, but she has evidently cultivated what nature has given her—a fine voice—with the most sedulous and successful attention.

17.—Winter's Tale—Ibid.

18 —CAIUS GRACCHUS [1st time]—Ibid.

This new tragedy is the production of Mr. KNOWLES, the author of "*Virginus*." Although it evinces a very large portion of dramatic skill and poetical talent, yet we are disposed to consider it as greatly inferior to its predecessor. Much of this inferiority is to be ascribed to the diminished facility which the subject affords of being wrought up into tragedy. CAIUS GRACCHUS was one of those accomplished demagogues who used to spring up in the tempestuous times of the Roman Republic with the most alarming frequency. He is described by PLUTARCH as being a person of great capacity, ambitious of distinction, unsettled in his views, vehement in his passions, possessing great suavity in his manners, and fitted in every respect for becoming the successful leader of a disturbed and disaffected populace. CICERO more than once alludes to his oratorical powers, in the language of unmeasured praise. His noble lineage and unimpeached integrity gave him a great ascendancy with all parties—an ascendancy which he employed to protect the rights of the people and abate the insolent oppression of the patricians. Thus far the historical character of CAIUS GRACCHUS is not unfitted for dramatic poetry. But there is a deficiency in other essential particulars. He is merely mixed up with popular commotions—there is no conflict and struggle of passion—no variety of interest—nothing which appeals to our individual and personal sympathies: all is cold, stately, and political. To remedy these defects, Mr. KNOWLES has introduced his wife *Licina*, and his mother *Cornelia*, on the scene. Still the want of interest is manifest throughout, and the tragedy, with all its excellence of composition, is now and then heavy in the representation. The plot is simple enough:—

It opens with the successful pleading of *Caius Gracchus*, in behalf of *Vettius*, who is accused of treason by *Opimius*. The senators, fearful of the influence of *Gracchus* over the passions of the people, and aware of his desire of avenging the death of his brother *Tiberius*, appoint him to the situation of *Quæstor* (under *Opimius*) in a distant province. *Gracchus* returns at the expiration of his duty, is

accused by *Opimius* of disobedience, is tried, and acquitted, and, in spite of the opposition of the senators, is elected tribune. His influence and power are now exerted to advance the interests of the people, in opposition to the encroachments of the patricians; but these last, through the agency of his colleague *Drusus*, for a short time injure his popularity. The insults and injuries of the senators (headed by *Opimius*, who is now consul) rouse his passions to the highest pitch, and, incited by the wilder fury of his friends and partizans, he assumes the attitude of defiance. The accidental murder of a lictor, by one of his followers, brings the disturbances to a crisis, and a battle ensues. *Caius* is worsted, nearly all his friends destroyed; he rushes to the temple of *Diana*, where his mother, wife, and child, had previously fled for protection; and after taking a solemn farewell, he secretly stabs himself to the heart. With this last circumstance the tragedy ends.

It will be clear from this analysis, that the whole tragedy depends upon the character of *Gracchus*. It is the nucleus about which all the other personages are made to cluster; and any one of them might be abstracted without the slightest diminution of the general interest. This is a material fault, and has arisen, we are certain of it, from the author's desire to please his friend Mr. MACREADY. We may admire the strength of his friendship, though we are bound to condemn the feebleness of his judgment. There is little originality in any of the characters, and not a spark of invention in the situations. *Coriolanus*, *Julius Cæsar*, and even *Virginius*, have been most liberal contributors to the different incidents and situations of the present tragedy. The same noisy and fickle populace, the same heartless and violent subordinate demagogues, the same scenes of cajolery and speechification, of accusation and defence, of patrician accusation and democratic triumph, are presented to the attention of the audience. We scarcely recollect any modern play which furnishes such slight evidence of original power in the contrivance and combination of events. In point of passion, we have to repeat that it wants intenseness and variety. It is all in one strain. It is violent, not deep; it thunders upon our ears, but does not steal upon our hearts. Even the scenes between *Gracchus*

and *Licinia* are not affecting: she is too boisterous or too mawkish to have much influence over our feelings. The language is the most creditable part of the piece: it is vigorous, manly and dramatic. Though evidently tinged with the colouring of the elder dramatists, it is still original, and exhibits great taste, judgment, and skill in the author. In speaking of the performance, our remarks must in a great measure be founded upon those which have already been made. Excepting the part of *Gracchus*, the others afforded but a very limited scope for the display of histrionic talent. *Cornelia* (Mrs. BUNN) is a poor personage indeed; she is often on the stage, but has nothing important to say or do. Mrs. BUNN was a mere cypher; even the stately and queen-like dignity of her manner seemed to be out of place, and the general feeling of the audience was that of disappointment, at finding the famous mother of the *Gracchi* (*Mater Gracchorum*) reduced to the miserable station of a figurante. *Licinia* (Mrs. WEST) was invested with a higher degree of importance, and in the last act had a large share in the interest of the piece. Mrs. WEST was unable to get rid of her propensity for whining; but in the scene where she parts with her husband, and in that likewise where she meets him in the temple, she was uncommonly successful. TERRY had a wretched copy of *Menenius* (*Coriolanus*) to sustain. The character is not historical, and it was scarcely worth the discredit of filching it from SHAKSPEARE. Mr. ARCHER in *Opimius*, exhibited considerable power, and made a repulsive part as attractive as it was possible to make it. But the great fascination of the piece, and most assuredly its sole support was the *Gracchus* of MACREADY. it was full of power and passion. No man on the stage, or who has been upon the stage for many years, could have played it so well. His declamation in some parts attained even to something like sublimity, and he delivered "the grand and swelling sentiments of liberty" (as BURKE has it) with a feeling, enthusiasm, and devotedness, which thrilled through the house. The applause was beyond all example. MACREADY indulged less than is usual with him in the tricks and affections of his ordinary style, and relying upon his own great powers, presented a specimen of acting, which, of its kind, was equal to any thing which he

has ever yet effected. The last act was, in every part of it, most excellent, and the curtain fell amidst the loudest and longest approbation we ever recollect at the performance of a new piece. It was announced for this evening by MACREADY himself. This was in the true spirit of theatrical coxcomby. Could not the actor be satisfied with the applause, he had just received, without rushing out again to be greeted with a new round of huzzas? Has an actor no feeling of sympathy with the character he has just represented?

The prologue was heavy and common-place, and delivered by TERRY with the most amusing gravity of manner. The epilogue was more harsh, and delivered amidst the hisses and hootings of the audience. We do not feel inclined to fill up our pages with either of them.

19.—Ibid—Ibid.

20.—Ibid—Cupid and Folly—Ibid.

21.—Ibid—Old and Young—Ibid.

22.—Ibid—Deaf as a Post—Ibid.

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE.

Journal of Performances, with Remarks.

Oct. 23.—Point of Honour—Padlock—Beacon of Liberty.

The "*Point of Honour*" has been performed two or three times this season, *Bertha* having been undertaken by Miss FOOTE, in consequence of the indisposition of Miss F. H. KELLY. The substitution, we understand, was such as might be expected from the growing merits and experience of the former lady, who, in this part and the *Miller's Maid*, has exhibited a degree of power and pathos much beyond the general level of the characters assigned to her. Our business, however, at present, is with Miss KELLY, who, not very fortunately for herself, assumed a character, the general requisites of which are possessed by her predecessor in a greater degree than by herself—a character, too, that required a very small portion of the force and energy in which she more especially excels. The grief of *Bertha* is simply excited, produces no *variety* of emotion, but is

merely that of a tender and attached young girl, who fears for the life of her lover, and laments an overwhelming calamity. There is no note, therefore, to which *fortissimo* can be very properly applied, a moment or two of frantic grief excepted. In these Miss KELLY was forcible and commanding; but, unhappily, she sought to make passages equally so, which demanded no such exertion. This was in bad taste, both as following Miss FOOTE, and in itself. What shade is to a picture is repose to an actor; and eternal attempts at energy are sure to be misplaced, and for the best of all possible reasons, because they are unnatural. The most violent grief is not thus expressed, even when it is really felt. There were some very fine points, however, and one has been universally noticed,—we mean the burst of joy expressed by *Bertha* on the recovery of *Durimel*, which was highly applauded. In short, by due repression, Miss KELLY will add greatly to her reputation; and although we do not recommend the practice of sleeping in some parts of a character, in order to give effect to others, we think a little consideration of the motives to such occasional policy would prove anything but injurious to this lady. The *Durimel* of Mr. KEMBLE was a fine, chaste performance; every accent and attitude was admirably effective. It is not easy for COOPER to look an aged major, but his performance in other respects was sound; and as to the *Valcour* of ABBOT, it was one of the most spirited specimens of impudent *philandering* we have seen for a long time; and the house at large was evidently of our opinion. BLANCHARD made the miserable *Steibelt* as diverting as the miserable *Steibelt* could be made, and no man could do more.

24.—Stranger—Miller's Maid.

25.—Slave—Roland for an Oliver.

27.—Hamlet—Vision of the Sun.

28.—Inconstant—HAROLD THE RENEGADE, or the *Red-Cross Knights* [1st time]—Fortune's Frolic.

This was a ballet of action; not a word was spoken, nor was there any new scenery displayed. *Requiescat in pace!* it is no more. The getter of it up was a Mr. VENEFA, from the Lisbon theatre, whose extraordinary style of *high-flying* (for we dare not call it dancing) excited the mirth of the

audience at first, who at times were in a roar of laughter; but as the ballet proceeded, great disapprobation was manifested. Mr. VENEFA's was the most grotesque performance we ever witnessed; he absolutely twirled like a tætotum or spinning-top, to the exhibition of face only in circular movement; while his leaps vied with those of Mons. PAUL and his grimaces, the bewitching grins of GRIMALDI. He will suit the minors very well; but will never be tolerated any where else. The dancing was very mediocre, and the piece was damned inevitably.

29.—Henry VIII.—Beacon of Liberty.

30.—Comedy of Errors—Duel.

31.—Wheel of Fortune—Roland for an Oliver.

Nov. 1.—Inconstant—Irish Tutor—Miller's Maid.

2.—Macbeth—Blind Boy.

4.—No performance.—The Theatre was closed in consequence of Miss M. TREE's indisposition, by which the new opera which was intended to have been produced this evening was postponed.

The following is a copy of the Letter and Certificate which led to the postponement

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR—During the last week, and more particularly since the rehearsal on Saturday, my daughter has been extremely unwell, and it is with real regret that I find myself obliged to forward to you this morning a Certificate from her medical adviser, who informs me that she requires a secession from labour for eight or ten days, before she can with safety resume her professional labours.

I have delayed writing until this morning, in the hope of obtaining permission for her attendance at the Theatre; but as that is at present impracticable, I can only deplore the necessity, and trust that you may be enabled to make your arrangements without her.

I am, dear Sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed)

M. TREE.

CERTIFICATE.

I hereby certify that Miss M. TREE is at present very much indisposed. There is a great degree of general weakness and relaxation of her frame, with occasional spasms

affecting the chest and stomach. She is incapable of using any great exertion; and it appears to me that rest and quiet for some weeks will be requisite for her health, which otherwise might materially suffer from a relapse of her former severe indisposition.

(Signed)

JOHN MITCHELL, M.D.

3rd November, 1823.

5.—CORTEZ, or the Conquest of Mexico—[1st time.]—
Cent. per Cent.

“We shall have *Genets* for Cousins-German
And *Barbary coursers* for kinsmen”.

The two Winter Theatres appear to be running a race of rivalry in the pomp and magnificence of their spectacles—a race—than which nothing in the end can prove more dangerous and destructive. To this perverted taste for “inexplicable dumb-show, and noise”—the legitimate drama is continually sacrificed in a manner that makes us greatly fear for the purity and exalted character of our stage. But old Drury has been eminently successful in its “*Cataract*” and it could not but be expected that Covent Garden would soon procure an equal number of horses to tread its boards.

“Who will say that the laws are no longer in force,
Recorded in *Metamorphosean* fable?

Since our Manager’s raised to be Masters of Horse
And our Theatre sunk to a livery stable”.

We must confess we are not pleased with these things, altho’ we are not so much inclined to quarrel with the horses themselves—as in both the pieces they add greatly to the magnificence of the various scenes in which they are introduced, and it does not appear to us that they are allowed in any instance to mar the sense and business of the plot by an unnecessary introduction—we are only sorry that the taste of the town should oblige the managers to have recourse to the experiment, and shed tears that the divine SHAKSPEARE who in his time drew all London after him, can scarcely in this degenerate age bring one full house.

“Methinks I hear the sad Pierian choir,
Scudding about their forked hill in groupes,
And telling each the other all they heard,
From that malignant gossip blatant FAME;
(Like underwriters maddening at LLOYD’S
When *Eurus* in the Baltic’s playing Old Nick)

Then bawling for their *eau de vie*, to raise
 Their sinking spirits 'bove the freezing point
 Of cold, benumbing, devilish dismay."

We are grieved to behold that hunger for spectacle and the *illegitimate Drama* which so glaringly prevails with the more numerous and coarser part of the metropolitan public. It is so woefully significant of the decline of intellect and a just taste, that we really consider every manifestation of approval that is given to representations like these as a death wound to the mental character of our nation. When is the love of mummery to know abatement if there is no public check put to its progress.—To what purpose was SHAKESPEARE born a dramatic author, if the public taste be more ravenous to behold the whipt syllabubs of stupid romance than his sublime dramas!—For us to attempt to stem the tide of popular liking would be an hopeless task—and when we stand and view the pit and gallery doors of Covent-garden and Drury-lane on the evenings of performance of the two gorgeous spectacles—we become hopeless from conviction—dumb from astonishment!

"Let HERCULES himself do what he may,
 Folly will breathe! HORSES will have their day!"

We must now dispatch our account of the piece at Covent-garden.

The piece opens with the meeting of the Spanish soldiery, and the conspiracy of two of their chiefs to reject the authority of *Cortez*, and return to *Cuba*. *Cortez* [Mr. COOPER] successfully appeals to his companions in arms, who desert their seducers, and the latter are put under arrest. Hearing that the inhabitants are about to attack him, the Spanish leader burns his fleet, and leaves his army no choice but conquest or death; and in the meantime, ambassadors arrive from the Emperor *Montezuma*, who offer him golden presents and assistance to *depart*; the former of which he accepts, but of course he refuses to leave the country until he has seen the Emperor. This embassy is accompanied by *Tehuco*, [BENNETT] a Mexican hero, who loudly declaims against the foreign *sorcerers*, and receiving the present of a sword from *Cortez*, threatens to employ it to his destruction. The next act opens with *Cortez* on his way towards

Mexico; he is attacked by the independent Tlascalans and Mexicans, and here a dashing battle takes place, of which more anon. Their submission rapidly follows the victory of the Spaniards, and *Teluxo*, in concert with the priesthood of Chollula lays a plan for the destruction of the Spaniards. while passing through that town towards Mexico—*Montezuma*, in consequence of the late victory, having over come his objection to a friendly reception in his capital. *Cortez* is apprized of this danger by a Tlascalan, whose life he had saved, and defeats it just in time to save his Indian love, *Marina*, (1) [Miss LOVE] who had been led away by her brother *Teluxo*, unknown to him, from being sacrificed by the priest to their ugly Pagod. This transaction, and the destruction of the temple, concludes the second act. *Cortez* subsequently escapes another snare by means of the intelligence obtained by *Marina*; and the piece terminates with the triumphal entry of the Spaniards into Mexico. So much for the main story, which is quite enough for our purpose, without dwelling upon the interest arising from the relationship of *Teluxo* and *Marina*, and an underplot borrowed from the *Indian Emperor* of DRYDEN, (2) in which two bro-

(1) This is founded on fact, for *Marina* is the shadow of a real character. *Cortez*, whose active history is a romance, was mainly indebted to the faithful and passionate attachment of a female Mexican for his ultimate success, and his christianised *Marina* has, in consequence, secured a place in history.

(2) This extravagant play of DRYDEN's is in rhyme, and was once the favourite of our very early youth. How impressed upon us was its eloquent opening, at once exhibitive of the majestic march of its author's line and of his style of comparison and reflection—so fine but undramatic:—

“On what new happy climate are we thrown.
So long kept secret, and so lately known?
As if our old world modestly withdrew,
And here, in private, had brought forth a new.”

Several of these speeches are reduced into humble prose by the maker up of *Cortez*, to their infinite disfigurement, being neither one thing nor the other.

thers love the same female, and are led into the usual game at cross purposes, both in love and war, on that account.

This story will be seen to have the advantage of a beginning, middle, and end, and is moreover founded on a subject of history, which is highly romantic, and is well enough calculated for the purpose of the scenic, and melo dramatic display for which it is intended.

The scenery is striking, but we must be just and say, certainly not equal to the recent efforts in the same line at Drury-lane, and a similar observation will apply to the pageantry, looking at richness and variety alone. The employment of the horses assumes the merit of verisimilitude, in this instance, in consequence of their known operation in this celebrated conquest, and the small number that the conqueror had with him, which fact makes the dextrous mention of thirteen only having been left (the number here employed) dramatically probable. The scene in which the astonished natives assembled to behold the interview between *Cortez* and the ambassadors, approach and run away from the paraded cavalry, is exceedingly picturesque and well imagined; but the battle scene with the *Tlascalians* is the *chef d'œuvre* in this way. The disposition of the stage is novel.—A steep ascent runs from the floor, by the side of a scenic cataract; up this the horses pass, after rising from below by an apparent defile. They cross a line of bridges, and return in the sight of the audience, and this descent is to be regarded as something difficult and new. The battle is grand, but more especially heightened by a contest between one of the cavalry and a native, in which the former is unhorsed. The bold Indian mounts the charger, and his courage and mismanagement of the horse, and the consequent rage and ungovernability of the latter, form a picture in the highest degree animated. This struggle terminates in the horse running up the ascent, crossing the bridge, and in that act, throwing his bold but unskilful rider over into the gulf below. The whole episode was excellently managed, and does *Dacrow* and his charger almost equal credit.

Mr. COOPER was the hero, and he exerted himself with an effect surpassing all his former efforts. His performance was of the most dignified kind; and the speeches were delivered with his usual declamatory excellence, and his acting

was much more energetic than usual. FAWCETT performed a cowardly *Farrier* to the troops, he was at times very ludicrous, and sang a humorous ditty with great *naïveté*. BENNETT and T. P. COOKE held distinguished places in the spectacle, and were both very respectable—the former in particular—there was some fine acting between him and his sister in the last act. Miss PATON sang with great brilliancy and spirit, first a ballad "*Alas ! for Tlascala,*" and what was still more in her way, a bravura of great difficulty, with extraordinary effect. Miss LOVE, who assumed the part designed for Miss M. TREE, both acted and sung with great feeling, but the part was far from being striking. A Rondo and Chorus by PYNE, TAYLOR, ISAACS, and Miss LOVE, "*Hark ! 'tis the Indian drum,*" was very beautiful, and was loudly *encored*. Although the piece altogether is not so effective as that at the rival house, yet the operational part of it will effect more than all the rest, for Mr. BISHOP's music is delightful. The piece was received with immense applause.

6.—Ibid—Duel.

7.—Ibid—Miller's Maid.

8.—Ibid—Roland for an Oliver.

10.—Ibid—Forest of Bondy.

11.—As You Like It—Irish Tutor—Cent. per Cent.

12.—Cortez—Roland for an Oliver.

13.—Ibid—FERRY OF THE GUIERS—[1st time.]

The plot of this stupid piece is scarcely worth the narrating—for we do not exaggerate when we say, that we do not recollect ever having been condemned to witness a piece more improbable in its story, more thriftless and disconnected in its dialogue, or more destitute of every characteristic to retrieve it from its utter insipidity than this. The following detail will we think satisfy our readers as to the truth of these observations.

Francois, a ferryman, [RAYNER] is introduced on the stage, and details to some country people the loss of his only son, who has been drowned on his return, after having ferried some persons to the opposite beach. The circumstances of his son's death are narrated with a monotonous prolixity, and in a strain of manufactured declamation the most improbable and unnatural. *Mademoiselle D'Arville*

next appears, and in her turn narrates to the ferryman a tale of woe. Her father and mother, the *Count* and *Countess D'Arville*, [Mr. BAKER and Mrs. FAUCIT] are flying from the persecution of the French Revolution: she implores shelter for them in the house of the ferryman, and further beseeches him to row them across, as, should they reach Savoy, they would be no longer in danger. The old man admits them. Shortly after their admission, a party of "citizen soldiers," by orders of the French Directory, arrive to apprehend them. A *Captain Blaize* [FARLEY] heads the party, and appears to read a description of the persons of the party of whom he is in pursuit. He holds the paper reverse whilst he reads, which is not uncharacteristic of the ignorance of the French officers of that period. He swaggers with a self-sufficient air, says many incongruous things, such as that he "weeps at a tragedy," and that he was himself "a famous executioner at Paris." The ferryman and the *Captain* get upon the subject of politics, in which the former proves himself to be the most inveterate of Tories. This is a practical illustration of the maxim, "*Sutor ne ultra crepidam*," with a vengeance. When the *Captain* departs, another party enter the house on a similar pursuit. The young lady puts on the dress of the drowned boy; the police pun upon the *Captain's* name; one says that *Blaize* is only *smoke*; the other says something more absurd still; the ferryman is made prisoner; on a sudden the son starts into life, rescues his father—and the curtain falls.

Such is this maudlin drama. The last scene is the very climax of absurdity—the idea of a son whom the father had seen drowned—of whose existence neither a hope nor belief is expressed throughout the piece, starting into life upon the stage, without any person knowing "how the devil he came there," is an attempt to make imagination outrage reason, instead of harmonizing as she always ought to harmonize with it. WEBSTER's tragedy, in which the *Duchess* is made to lie-in between the acts, and a race of young tragic heroes are produced before the close of the fifth act, contains a probable event compared with the instantaneous resurrection of the ferryman's son in this piece.

The actors, MESSRS. FARLEY, RAYNER, MEADOWS, KEE-

LEY, and Miss FOOTE, did what they could for the piece—but the “non-contents” were most violent, although some slight approbation was expressed.

14.—Ibid—Ibid.

15.—Gamester—Miller’s Maid.

Mrs. BARTLEY, after an absence of eight years, re-appeared before a metropolitan audience as *Mrs. Beverley* in the tragedy, and on her entrance was welcomed with an ardent and highly gratifying manifestation of the public regard. She portrayed the too affectionate, amiable, and confiding consort of the deluded *Beverley*, beautifully. If we were to select any scene in which she particularly excelled, we should mention that in which she rejects the infamous overtures of *Stukely*, [COOPER] and the final scene, which from the truth and fidelity of her acting, and that of Mr. YOUNG, was absolutely painful.

YOUNG played *Beverley*, and played it admirably. His representation of the ruined, wretched, and despairing gamester was indeed “a great moral lesson,” rendered, a little more striking and effective, by the event which has so recently engrossed and agitated the public mind. Whether this tragedy was produced with any reference to that horrible transaction we would hardly venture to hazard a conjecture—but we could not help observing that passages in which the sordid vice of gaming was stigmatized were received with much longer and louder applause than we ever recollect at any former representation of the tragedy.

17.—Cortez—Forty Thiev es.

18.—Ibid—Husbands and Wives.

19.—Cabinet—Cent. per Cent.

Mr. SINCLAIR made his appearance in the opera after six years’ absence. Our readers are aware that this favourite and accomplished vocalist has employed the interval between his former appearance at Covent Garden and his present engagement in cultivating and improving his delightful talents in Italy, where he was held in high repute, and whence we have occasionally heard of his lucrative engagements and growing fame. His first appearance, last evening, excited the utmost expectation. Mr. S. satisfied the anxious impatience of the audience by appearing in the se-

cond act. He was received with cheers, waving of hats, and every demonstration of enthusiastic welcome. He gave the song of the "*Beautiful Maid*" with great effect. The subdued modulations of his voice are exquisite. He does not seem equally perfect in direct expression. His cadences certainly equal the skill of the best tenor singer that has yet appeared on either the English or Italian stage. He was *encored* in this song with applause that yielded only to the enthusiasm with which two repetitions of the "*Polacca*" were demanded, and given. The "*Bird Duet*" was also rapturously *encored*. Mr. S. introduced an air of ROSSINI, with brilliant variations, and another of his own composition, which displayed much taste in melody. Altogether, although Mr. S. may not have improved much by exportation as to manner and dialogue, yet he has unquestionably availed himself of the opportunities afforded him for improvement in singing, which is the department of the drama in which he aspires to excellence. It is certain there is no male singer on the stage at present equal to him, if we except Mr. BRAHAM. At the close of the Opera Mr. FAWCETT came forward to announce it for repetition; Mr. SINCLAIR was called for, and Mr. FAWCETT apologised; but in consequence of his exertions of that evening, and past fatigue, it was announced that the play could not be repeated until Saturday. Loud and continued applausse followed. The *debut* of Mr. S. upon the whole, was most successful, and his appearance at this theatre may be fairly termed, in dramatic phrase "a hit."

20.—Cortez—Miller's Maid.

21.—Gamester—Timour the Tartar.

22.—Cabinet—Ibid.

MINOR DRAMA.

SURREY THEATRE.

Nov. 17th.—*The Murderers and Gamblers*.—A piece under this title was brought out at this theatre to a very numerous house. To give any sketch of its character or plot

would be but to intrude upon our readers a repetition of the dreadful scenes and circumstances that are connected with the late horrible murder in Hertfordshire, and of all the improbable exaggerations of guilt which rumour has associated with it. The fictitious names of *Mordant*, *Woodville*, and *Bradshaw*, are substituted for those of PROBERT, THURTELL, and HUNT. The scenes of PROBERT's Cottage, and Gill's-hill-lane, are plagiarized from a Sunday paper. There are also scenes of a gaming-house in Pall mall; of the public house at which it is supposed WEARE stopped on his way to PROBERT's cottage—nay, the identical gig and horse are introduced upon the stage; and every effort, in short, is made, that scenic representation and perverted ingenuity can effect, to bring guilt home to the unfortunate prisoners now under an awful charge in Hertford gaol. Is this just, or fair, or decent? It was, we thought, a pride with Englishmen, that ere a hair of the victim's head was touched, legal guilt should be established by legal proof; that without such proof even the peering suspicion of guilt, in the minds of the Jury or the Judge, availed as nothing; and, above all, that the only sentiment entertained towards an untried person, was a hope of his innocence. The melo-drama at the Surrey was an endeavour to extinguish those sentiments. The attempt to exculpate PROBERT from guilt might be regarded as "a leaning to mercy's side," were it not that such exculpation was only made for the purpose of blackening his alleged accomplices with augmented crime. On Monday night the body of *Frankley* was brought upon the stage in the last scene; but it was not introduced last evening. The curtain fell amidst pretty general applause, amid which, however, we were pleased to hear some hisses generously mingled. Mr. H. KEMBLE came out at the close of the piece, and informed the house that within the last few hours an intimation had been received from the legal authorities, prohibiting the future representation of it, and that it would, therefore, be withdrawn until "further notice." We presume the words "further notice" imply that it is again to be brought forward after the trial of the prisoners. Such announcement anticipates their conviction; and we can only say of it, that it is worthy of the spirit in which the play origina-

ted. The Magistrates, under whose control the minor theatres are, have creditably discharged their duty in issuing this prohibition. We could wish it had issued earlier, so as to have prevented even the first exhibition of a piece so little creditable to English feeling.

COBOURG THEATRE.

Nov. 2nd.—Splendid buildings, splendid decorations, and four-footed performers, are now quite the fashion; and the Coburg, which is never behind the public demand for novelties, has, on the opening of the winter season, gratified the prevailing taste in all these particulars. The house looks brilliant and beautiful, and we are compelled to wonder how decorations so extensive and magnificent could have been accomplished in so short a time. The hippodramatic spectacle, founded on Lord BYRON's poem, brings the whole resources of the establishment into action. The story is exceedingly well chosen for this species of drama, and has been very ingeniously managed. The horses, though not numerous, do what they have to do well, and this is more than can always be said of such coadjutors. The scene in which the wild horse runs off with *Mazeppa* attached to him is one of most striking effect: the extent of the platforms, and of the horse's run, produce a unique and interesting *coup d'œil*; that in which *Mazeppa* arrives amongst the Cossaks is one of equal splendor and effect. The whole piece went off with shouts of approbation. In our account of the horse-piece, we had almost forgotten to mention the melo-drama "*Mary Queen of Scots*," which, by the bye, is one of the most respectable productions we ever witnessed in a minor theatre.

17—A new piece was produced this evening, under the title of "*The Gambler's, or the Murderers at the Desolate Cottage*," which led to an expectation that recent events in Hertfordshire, which have so much agitated the public mind, would have been alluded to; but the title (which we understand is to be changed) was the only part of the piece that had the slightest reference to that appalling transaction. "*The Gamblers*" is founded on a French piece, called "*Les deux Inséparables*," and the gist of the plot

arises out of the deep-rooted friendship of two companions, *Boudoir*, STANLEY, and *Olivier*, BENGOUGH, who swear to each other, that the first who dies shall appear again to assist and protect his surviving friend. They had both been in love with *Eugenia la Loire*, Mrs. POPE, and *Boudoir* had given up his claim to her hand, because he would not destroy the happiness of his friend. *Olivier*, in consequence, left Paris for Orleans, to be married to *Eugenia*, and on the road was murdered by *Petroville*, BRADLEY, who himself wished to make her his wife, on account of her fortune, assisted by *Eugenia's* brother, HILL. After his murder, *Olivier* appears to *Boudoir*, and claims his promise of eternal friendship, by avenging him on his murderers, at the same time that he promises to protect him under all his difficulties. *Boudoir* hastens to *La Loire*, MUSGRAVE, where every thing is prepared for the wedding, and *Olivier* momentarily expected. He does not, however, immediately disclose the circumstance of *Olivier's* murder, and the preparatory rejoicings for the wedding are going on until the two assassins make their appearance, when *Boudoir's* agitation at the sight of them excites the suspicion of *Eugenia*, and she seeks an opportunity of seeing *Boudoir* in private, from which interview she is convinced that her brother is the murderer of her intended husband. *Boudoir* makes a promise to *Eugenia* that her family shall not be disgraced by the mention of her brother's name as an accessory in the murder, and is renewing his professions of love, when his friendship for *Olivier* flashes across his mind, and makes him quit her hand. The ghost of *Olivier* appears to them, and *Eugenia's* forebodings are increased. It again appears to *Boudoir*, charges him with perjury, and demands of him to perform his promise, or give up the paper, written in their blood, which proclaimed eternal friendship between them. *Boudoir* positively refuses to give up the paper. In the next scene *Boudoir* is interrogated by *La Loire* as to the assassins of *Olivier*, in the presence of *Petroville* and his son. He replies, that he will tell them all at the desolate cottage in an hour. *Boudoir* goes to the cottage where *Olivier* was murdered, and the assassins meet him there, and are about to kill him, when a thunderbolt strikes the house, and *Olivier's* ghost appears and saves him. All the

characters then rush on the stage. and the last act of the ghost is to perform the marriage ceremony between his friend and rival and betrothed wife; at which time he declares that he was only prevented from an incestuous marriage with his sister by assassination; for the young man who had assumed the name was not *La Loire's* son; but he stood in that relationship towards him. There is, as our readers may conceive, a plentiful supply of the marvellous and terrible in the plot, which however presents many points of deep interest. The performers did much for the piece, particularly Mrs. POPE, and Messrs. STANLEY and BENGOUGH. The acting of the latter was highly careful and spirited. The scenery was very good, and the house well filled.

OLYMPIC THEATRE.

After a week's delay, occasioned by what the hills termed "an unforeseen accident," the Olympic Theatre commenced its entertainments for the present season on Monday evening, Oct. 27. Like the several other theatres of the metropolis, the Olympic has to boast of its decorations, additional embellishments, &c. The saloon presents an improved and enlarged appearance, by the removal of the bar for refreshments from its centre to the extreme end, and opposite the entrance; two large stoves have been placed in the pit, and one in the box lobby, and (as in the great winter establishments) backs have been put to the seats in the pit. Much accommodation has been also afforded in the other parts of the house, in which it is manifest that very creditable efforts have been made for the convenience of the public.—Mr. BAKER spoke an address before the commencement of the entertainments last evening, which, from the similar termination of certain words, we guessed was intended for poetry. It was, in truth, a sorry production; but it was spoken by a lady, and for an occasion, and may therefore be spared the severity of harsh criticism. "*The Irish Polander*," a petite piece in one act, called "*Recommendation*," and "*Giovanni in Botany*," were the entertainments of the evening. The three pieces were, we believe, entirely new, and most of the performers

in each piece were also new candidates for dramatic reputation in London. Of course we do not mean to inflict upon our readers an analysis of these several pieces and the merits of the performers who appeared in them ; it is more to our convenience, and we presume to the taste of our readers, to give them a general recommendation, to which they are indeed justly entitled. Mr. POWER, in *Irish characters*, is certainly an acquisition of no ordinary desert ; and Mr. W. WEST, together with some valuable auxiliaries from the Haymarket and English Opera-house, are likely to make the Olympic a place of popular and fashionable resort this season. Mrs. BAKER played *Giovanni*, and played it with a very agreeable vivacity ; and her joyous spirit, in *Botany*, was a happy comment upon the text, "*Cælum non animum mutant, qui trans mare natant.*"

MISS M. TREE AND MISS PATON.

Mr. DRAMA,

Knowing the impartial principles upon which the Drama is conducted, and that heedless of the smiles or frowns of managers, your pages fearlessly censure or praise, as occasion may require, I am induced to offer a few remarks upon a subject which has occasioned considerable controversy among the newspapers, viz. upon the indisposition of Miss M. TREE. As a letter from *Edinburgh* upon a theatrical dispute in London may appear somewhat out of character, I should first premise, that although the writer is *at present* in *Edinburgh*, he is, "thanks to the gods," no stranger to London, its theatres, and their concerns. Some of the newspapers have presumptuously affirmed, that Miss M. TREE's indisposition is merely feigned, in consequence of having an inferior part to Miss PATON assigned to her. These paragraphs have evidently been inserted by *malicious enemies*, and upholders of Miss PATON. Now, without enquiring whether Miss M. TREE is indisposed or not, (which would be most ungracious and ungentelemanly to doubt, even were it not proved beyond all dispute, by the certificate of a respectable physician, and a letter from that young lady's father, and from Mr. BISHOP,) I have no hesitation in affirming, that the managers of Covent Garden, have ever since Miss

PATON's engagement at that house, behaved in a *highly unjust* manner towards Miss M. TREE, who has been so long, as "John Bull" says, "the sole prop of their house." But let them look to it! they have lost lately some *valuable jewels*, let them be careful they lose no more. It is well known, that Miss M. TREE is engaged at Covent Garden as the *first* vocalist; that she is worthy of being so, the public have amply testified; and, consequently, if she is offered an inferior part to Miss PATON, she is not only justified in refusing to play it, but it is a duty which she owes to herself, as well as to the public before whom she has always appeared with much *éclat* in "*first rate parts*." The conduct of the managers last season, in endeavouring to put Miss PATON before Miss TREE, (in which, however, they did not succeed) tended, from the many *false statements* which appeared, to affect Miss TREE materially, in a professional point of view, for blame was attached to her, as well as to Miss PATON, when, in fact, the managers were alone deserving of censure. And what is their interest (may I ask them) in *taking upon themselves* to give an unjust preference to Miss PATON, who is not only inferior to Miss TREE as a vocalist and a performer, but by not one tenth part so great a favourite with the public. What can be their motives in acting thus? Are they swayed by any *powerful private interest* which Miss PATON possesses, (which I rather suspect is the case) or do they erroneously imagine, because Miss PATON has lately acquired some celebrity as a singer, that for the sake of novelty she will prove more attractive. The public have decided otherwise; and let them look to it in time, or they may perhaps lose what they may afterwards regret. Had *private interest* and *partiality* less influence over managers, these disagreeables would not occur--and in the mean time let the public condemn *those* who are deserving of being condemned, and not the performers, who have the common right with every one of maintaining their own individual privileges. I shall now conclude, by apologizing for having so long intruded, but as my motives in writing this (which are palpably evident) are good, I trust you will honour me with a place; what I have stated is "the plain and simple truth," and I feel assured, Mr. DRAMA, that

both yourself and your readers will uphold it as such.

Edinburgh, Nov. 16th.

I am, &c. M——.

COUNTRY THEATRICALS.

MANCHESTER.—Manchester and Liverpool are about thirty-six miles distant from each other, and the theatres have the same company; ours being open in the winter, and the Liverpool one during summer. By this junction we are enabled to keep together a better company than any other out of the metropolis; and really, until lately, we have had some reason to boast of them; but several mutations have lately been made, in which we are fallen into “a heavy declension.” In the first place, we lost our first tragic actor, VANDENHOFF, who, after being rather scurvily used at Covent Garden, for thinking too highly of himself, returned to Liverpool; but our wiseacres thought proper to refuse him, preferring his successor, SALTER, a good-looking ranter, fit only for one of your most outrageous minor theatres. Secondly, Mr. COOPER, who has taken more favourable root, after transplantation from our stage, left as his substitute, DIDDEAR, a most unwelcome change. Thirdly, TAYLEUR, who does not please at the Haymarket as he did here, is very unworthily succeeded by a feeble actor of the name of PENSON. Fourthly, Miss HAMMERSLY, now at Covent Garden, leaves a Miss GRADDON, who is only tolerable. And fifthly and lastly, BROWNE, one of the best of fops, in spite of diurnal critics, and far surpassing your boasted JONES, leaves a vacancy which we have no hopes of filling. I have taken up so much time in telling you what we have not, that I have no room to tell you what we have, excepting that on Saturday last we had MATTHEWS in *Goldfinch* and *Tonson*: the former but tolerable; but the latter inimitable, excellent, superlative! And next Saturday we shall have charming KITTY STEPHENS—*au revoir*.

Your's,

Nov. 10, 1823.

ROVER.

PLYMOUTH, Mr. Drama, This elegant place of Theatrical amusement was opened a month or two ago for a short season under the superior management of Mr. BRUNTON

(the late Brighton manager) but he did not meet with the success he deserved having a good company and well selected amusements.

Mr. BRUNTON some years since was on the London boards and by many considered equal, even to Mr. ELLISTON—his lovely daughter is with him—she met with great applause in London on her first appearance the 12th Sept. 1817, and remained some considerable time a star of the first magnitude, since then she has been successful in Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Brighton, Chester, and the Norwich Theatres—she is a very fine girl, well formed, beautiful features and teeth, and possessed of every requisite to take the lead on the London boards in the head characters of comedy. Mr. BRUNTON took for his Benefit, "*The Will*" "*The Coronation*," and "*Three Weeks after Marriage*", *George Howard*, and *Albina*, by Mr. and Miss BRUNTON, who went through the same to the delight of a full audience, the house being about £90. "*Sir Solomon*," by Mr. S. BENNETT was a very creditable performance, as was "*The Rigid*," of a Mrs. WINDSOR. The "*Coronation*" was an attempt at show.—The Champions horse was very docile and the whole met the approbation of the "Gods above"—Nothing could be better than Mr. and Miss BRUNTONS personation in the farce of *Sir Charles*, and *Lady Racket*, and the *Drugget* of S. BENNETT.

A young man named FRIMBLEY went through a comic dance and exceeded every thing of the kind, I had before witnessed.—In point of agility few can possibly excell him, no doubt he would make an excellent *Harlequin*. Mr. and Mrs. S. BENNETT took for their benefit CIBBER's excellent comedy "*She would and she would not*," he playing *Don Manuel*, and she *Villette*, to the gratification of all present. *Don Octavia* and *Hyppolita* fell of course to Mr. and Miss BRUNTON, and were never in better hands, Miss B. looks charming in breeches. The rest of the characters were well sustained.—The amusing trifle of "*Actress of all Work*," followed, giving Miss BRUNTON an opportunity of shewing her abilities in such opposite characters. *Louge* and *Josephine* were much the best—but she should divest herself of a drawl sometimes which she occasionally falls into when unnecessarily enumerating every syllable—she

would leave us nothing then to wish for. BRUNTON as *Manager*, kept up the spirit of the piece, and a jumble of nonsense followed called "*Death of Life and London*," which only served to show that Mr. S. BENNETT could play *Logic* well, and a Miss HUDDART, *Kate*. On Mr. FRIMBLEY's night was produced a melo drama (written by himself) called the "*Ruffian Boy*," which pleased his friends. "*The Broken Sword*" followed in which Miss BRUNTON played *Myrtillo* very feelingly, and the house closed with a very neat address from BRUNTON for Miss BRUNTON's benefit, which was a bumper, with MURPHY's "*All in the wrong*," "*Miss in her Teens*," and "*Oberon and Cynthia*," *Sir John and Lady Restless* met with their exact representatives in Mr. BRUNTON and Miss HUDDART, who is a promising actress, and good figure, but *Belinda* in the hands of Miss BRUNTON could never fail of calling down the unanimous plaudits of an audience any where. In the interlude her *Miss Biddy* was excellent, and BRUNTON and S. BENNETT in *Flash and Fribble* made the house roar with laughter. In the fairy tale Mr. B. and his angelic daughter enchanted us with their playful enactment of *Oberon and Cynthia*, she indeed looks like a goddess, and the *Cupid* of a fine little boy called HARVEY, only served to picture her to me as a *Venus*.—she is indeed

—————"A Gem
Fit to adorn a monarch's crown"

She must be a treasure to her father and no doubt will continue a blessing. I cannot conclude without adding, I wish them both every success the drama affords, and am
your's ever

SAM SAM'S SON.

SOUTHAMPTON—Mr. Drama,—Since my last notice of our Theatrical amusements, we have witnessed little else but the usual routine of old pieces, some of which have certainly been represented very respectably, for instance the "*Castle Spectre*," "*Adelgitha*," "*Poor Gentleman*," &c. yet notwithstanding, the company has been playing to a "beggary account of empty benches." On Monday, the 3rd Inst. our truly comic genius FLOYER took his benefit, which proved a bumper, the pieces selected for the evening were "*The London Hermit*," "*'Tis all a Farce*," and

"*Sharp and Flat*," the whole of which were admirably acted and went off with eclat. Friday 7th "*Fish out of water*," "*Match making*," and "*Innkeeper's Daughter*," SHALDER's night. This *fish* appears to have been out of water some time, it is indeed a *stale* business, "*Match making*" was very imperfect and wanted fire. The "*Innkeeper's Daughter*," I think was ill managed with regard to the characters, for if SHALDERS as *Richard*, and COOKE, as *Harrop*, had exchanged it would have been a great improvement, and Mrs. SHALDERS in attempting the personation of *Mary* certainly made very free with her friends, but it was for her benefit, and that must plead an excuse, it was really quite a relief when she took her departure in the life boat. HOLLINGSWORTH's *Hans Ketzler* was excellent,

Southampton, Nov. 10th.

Yours &c.

A SOUTHAMPTON OBSERVER.

NORWICH—PANTHEON.—An unexpected source of amusement has appeared in the shape of an Amphitheatre, in Ranelagh Gardens, which opened on Monday, October 27th, with great eclat, under the auspices of Mr. KINLOCH, a stranger in Norwich; but if we may judge from the tact displayed in every department of his establishment, a perfect adept in his profession. Comfort and elegance are combined in the fittings up of the audience part, and a most extensive stage has been erected. The entertainments were of a miscellaneous nature, and quite in the style of the London minor theatres. They commenced with an interesting melo-drama, in which were displayed some good music, action, broad sword combats, and a most effective moonlight scene; then followed an act of horsemanship, some elegant feats on the slack wire, by Signora FERZI, and tight rope dancing by Mr. WILSON, who may be considered unrivalled; his performance was received with marked approval. To this was added a ludicrous burletta, called "*Black and White Bears*," which was got up with great splendour, and excited the risible faculties of the auditory from the commencement to the conclusion.

The following Address, written by Mr. C. DIBDIN, was spoken by Mr. KINLOCH:

Hail Norwich! seat of science and the arts,
Far fam'd for lib'ral minds and gen'rous hearts;

I come from London, taste's imperial court,
The school for fancy and the field for sport.
What my pretence ? what all the world pursues,
To please for praise—for profit, to amuse ;
I don't despair, your looks imply no danger,
And JOHN BULL ever patroniz'd the stranger.
If song you love, we'll carrol for eclat—
If dance, we'll foot it with the true grand pas :
Drama and melo-drama shall claim our time,
Motley and mirth, and fairy pantomime ;
While you in shoals to this gay scene resort,
To us at least, shall Norwich prove a port.
For fortune's race, we've horses all elate,
To start for favour and secure the plate ;
And while the jockies their proud course pursue,
With false pretensions we'll ne'er jockey you.
If fortune's cup we win, our zeal is such,
We to your health can ne'er take cup too much.
And as for hunting, Norfolk well may crack,
Of good staunch dogs we've brought a famous pack ;
A *real fox chase* shall we bring about,
Then all flock in, or we shall be thrown out.
Yet I've small fear our benches will be thin,
When your good nature is the whipper in ;
By you our pageants or our stage revil'd,
Would make us mute as *Snap* from *guild* to *guild*.
But let us hope, more loud than your applause,
Snap ne'er shall twang his laughing iron jaws.
Your bounty kind, to earn it while our work is,
Will make us proud as noted Norfolk turkies.
Vain of your plaudits, while we nightly strive
To keep good humour and good sense alive.
If aught deficient should appear, O grant
The kind indulgence which all mortals want ;
Yet one deficiency shall ne'er intrude,
The want of active, heartfelt, gratitude.

NORTH WALSHAM, NORFOLK.—The Norfolk and Suffolk Company are at present in this town, which has given me the opportunity of viewing Mr. D. FISHER in the arduous characters of *Shylock* and *Octavian*. His conception of both parts was strong, powerful, and just, the outlines were

sketched with accuracy, and the picture filled up with the richest tints of colouring by a masterly hand : never having seen KEAN, it is impossible for me to draw a comparison between them, but I am informed by those on whose judgment I can depend, that in the merciless *Jew* he was fully equal to him, and in some parts of the heart-broken *Octavian*, superior : in the former character he betrayed a true conception of deep malevolence and hypocritical plausibility ; in the very difficult scene with *Tubal*, which contains some of the finest transitions from grief to joy, and joy to grief, alternately, he was eminently successful ; and equally so in the last scene, where the malignant smile of self-security, with which he pronounced the words "till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond," gave a most powerful effect to them, and drew down loud and repeated plaudits. I have seen many *Shylocks* of the present day, but none that so strongly brought to my mind the inimitable acting of COOKE in this character.

In the forlorn and heart-broken *Octavian*, he was the true image of despairing love ; he appeared stricken to the "heart's core," and "*melancholy had marked him for her own.*" He displayed during the whole character, the utmost pathos and feeling ; his soliloquy, when gazing on the resemblance of *Floranthe*, the manner he pressed the picture to his lips, with his hair wiping the tears off, which appeared to fall upon it and dim its lustre, was a most impressive and fine piece of acting ; his mad bursts of passion, the transition from those to gentleness of demeanour, and his hysterical laugh, so strongly denoting a heart broken by affection, also his interview with *Floranthe*, were all given in so effective a manner as strongly to impress the spectators with his own feelings, and drew tears of commiseration from several of his female auditors ; by the force of his talents every description becomes impregnated with life, and starts before the mind with all the vividness of reality.

The merits of Mr. C. FISHER as a singer are well known to the public ; the compass of his voice, the power and sweetness of his tones, undoubtedly justify the admiration the amateurs of music so amply bestow on him ; his abilities as an actor are of a very superior kind ; his *Iago* and *Pierre* display no ordinary talents, and his *Charles Surface* is ex-

cellent; his *Michael Perez* and *Mercutio* remind us strongly of the late Mr. LEWIS; in the highly finished gentleman he pleases by the easy elegance of his manner, the liveliness of his humour, and his thorough knowledge of those niceties in the text which escape the observation of vulgar and uncultivated actors.

VINDEX.

North Walsham, Oct. 27th.

BRIDLINGTON QUAY, YORKSHIRE.—Mr. Drama,—As you allow a niche in your widely circulated miscellany for County Theatricals, I beg to offer a few remarks on the company performing here under the management of Mr. SMEDLEY, who has, I understand, been in the habit of attending this delightful watering place for many years “giving pleasure,” and ’tis to be hoped, “receiving profit”—than whom, from report, few are more deserving. The company consists of Messrs. SMEDLEY, NEVILLE, MAJOR, DITCHER, HENDERSON, HENRY, RICHARDS, &c. Mrs. Miss and Miss A. SMEDLEY, Mrs. NEVILLE, Mrs. COPPIN, and Miss SIMMS. Where *all* merit praise, perhaps it were invidious to name any in particular, yet I cannot withhold mentioning the excellence of Mr. SMEDLEY’s *Goldfinch*, Miss SMEDLEY’s *Sophia*, and Mrs. NEVILLE’s *Widow Warren*. Mr. NEVILLE and Mr. MAJOR are equally good in *Alfred Highflyer* and *Sir Mark Chase*, and Mr. DITCHER, in *Sir George Touchwood*, Messrs. HENDERSON and HENRY in *Saville* and *Courtall*, and Miss SIMMS, in *Lady Frances Touchwood*. Mrs. COPPIN in such parts as *Lady Evergreen* and *Madame Bellegarde*—nor ought Mr. COPPIN to be forgot in *Silky*, &c. &c. Miss A. SMEDLEY appears to be very young, but what she does, shews promise, and Mrs. SMEDLEY seldom performs—indeed I have not seen her during my stay.

Yours, &c.

A VISITOR.

WINCHESTER THEATRE.—Our old and respected friend Mr. MAXFIELD, took his benefit here on the 23d ult. The elections made on this occasion consisted of the “*Smuggler’s Cave*”—“*Is he Jealous?*”—and the laughable interlude of the “*Barber of Bagdad*.” These, with two *Comic Songs* by FLOYER, and an *Address* by Mrs. HAMB-LIN, (of the Bath Theatre) constituted the amusements for

the evening—the whole performed “by *Particular Desire*.” The house was pretty well attended, but the acting, with one or two exceptions, was far below mediocrity; never do I recollect an audience separating from a theatre more dissatisfied with what they had been to see, than on this occasion—it was the theme of conversation for several days after. I lament this the more, as it will operate much to the disadvantage of those who may take their benefit after him.

October 28th.—Notwithstanding the very unpropitious state of the weather, a very respectable audience visited the theatre this evening, to support one of the chief props of the establishment—FLOYER. Though the house was not so full as I have seen it on his preceding benefit nights, yet I am happy to hear that he expressed himself perfectly satisfied with the attendance; after what took place last week, I certainly did not expect to see so much company. Mr. F. spared no exertion in producing pieces that he thought would be most approved of by his patrons; and we are glad to say, that they were crowded with complete success. O’KEEFE’s laughable comedy of the “*London Hermit*” ushered in the amusements of the evening; to this followed the admirable farcetta of “*A Cure for Coxcombs*,”—and the very eccentric farce of “*Sharp and Flat*” summed up the whole. Of the performers generally, I am glad to have it in my power to speak in terms of the highest recommendation—they all exerted themselves to the utmost, and appeared anxious to erase from the memories of the spectators the impression which their performances of last week had made. FLOYER, as usual, was quite at home in the *sol fa* department, and delivered the following comic songs in that style of eccentricity which procured for him loud and continued approbation: viz. “*Love and the Tread Mill*”—“*London Old and New*”—“*Mr. Solomon and Betty Wade*”—and last, though not least, “*The Mill, (anglice) a Fight*,” the various scenes in which, he portrayed in the highest colours. Though the last song introduces so many characters, and is made up of so many flash expressions, he was eminently successful in it, nor did I observe a single passage in which he appeared to be at a loss.

I am sorry to hear it reported, that Mr. and Mrs. SHALDERS will not appear here after this season, having made arrangements to appear at Liverpool next year. This would be a severe blow upon the managers, as it will, perhaps, be some time before they will meet with one capable of undertaking so many different branches as Mr. S. He is a man (to use a quaint expression) "that can turn his hand to any thing," and I flatter myself, that the Liverpool heroes will find him a most valuable acquisition. He will carry with him the respect and esteem of many in this town.

Mr. and Mrs. DAVIES, it is said, also retire after the Southampton campaign is over. The former, being an excellent musician, composer as well as performer, and having received many valuable assurances of support in that town, intends to practice the profession of a teacher of Music, in which I wish he may be successful—if talent and respectability have any influence in such matters, I am convinced he will. This will be another heavy blow on the managers, who will be put to the right about to fill up the *vacuum* left by them and Mr. and Mrs. SHALDERS.

Nov. 11, 1823.

A LOVER OF THE DRAMA.

LYMINGTON.—Having read with pleasure your strictures on the different theatres in the kingdom, in your excellent publication, the *Drama*, and of our Theatre Royal, Southampton, in particular, allow me to submit a few remarks of my own, relative to the *Lymington* company of Comedians, at which place I am now residing, having left Southampton for a short time. The theatre is a compact little building, and calculated to hold about £50. with a company attached to it, equal, if not superior, in talent, to any out of London, though, perhaps, not so numerous as many;—under the management of Mr. PENSON, late of *Drury Lane*, who has obtained the most distinguished approbation, for the very able and correct manner in which his company is conducted. Mr. PENSON, as an actor, is of the very first class, in the comic department—old men, in particular—his *Sir Abel Handy*—*Sir Peter Teazle*—*Sir Benjamin Dove*—*Solus*—*Brummagen*, &c.&c. are inimitable specimens of the mimic art.

I was delighted a few evenings ago, to see the theatre

crowded with the fashion and beauty of Lymington, to witness a representation of COLMAN's sterling comedy of the "*Heir at Law*," which, for the credit of the performers collectively, I never saw better performed, or give more general satisfaction. The whimsicalities of *Pangloss*, with his quaint sayings and apposite quotations, lost none of their poignancy in the hands of PENSON, who seems by nature adapted for every part he performs, and gives a superiority of importance to all. The "*Post of a Peer*"—*Lord Duberley*, by a Mr. MORTIMER, late of our Theatre Royal, afforded a high treat of comic talent, seldom to be met with in a provincial theatre: the stupid unconsciousness of ignorance and vulgarity—the arch leer of importance to his new raised dignity—his vacant unmeaning stare of disappointment at the discovery of the "long lost *Henry Morland*, in the "sucking madman"—the ill accordance of dress and address in the ci-divant tallow-chandler, and new made lord, left nothing to be wished for—yet this gentleman is not without his faults, but they are of such a nature, that, when inclined to be angry, we are suddenly impelled to laugh at, and forgive him; notwithstanding, he should not forget *Hamlet's* advice to the players. The *Dick Dowlas* of ALLEN was not the *Dick Dowlas* we expected from him—it was very respectable, but wanted fire; the young lawyer's clerk, suddenly immersed from the obscurity and drudgery of an attorney's office at Castleton, to a splendid affluence and a title in London, I think, would have been a little more electrified at his sudden reverse of fortune, than Mr. ALLEN seemed to think necessary in his representation of a part, which I am sure he can perform better if he thinks proper; however, as a fault, he was on the right side—he was too gentlemanly. J. PENSON, son of the manager, in *Zekiel*, was more than clever, he surpassed the high expectations raised of him; *Zekiel* is a part which requires, with the fine feelings of sentiment occasionally, the broad humour of farce, as the frequent recollection of his father and mother's death, or the relation of his good luck in the lottery, &c. may suggest—Mr. J. PENSON possesses those qualifications in an eminent degree, and on this occasion exerted himself to the utmost; he possesses a richness of

humour, blended with a chasteness of acting, highly to be commended, seldom to be found. His exertions were received during the evening with many bursts of applause, of which he was highly deserving. Mr. GRANT, in *Kenrick*, did all he could for *Kenrick*, and of course pleased, but it is not a part calculated, nor ever intended to be performed by the gentleman into whose hands such parts as *Richard III.*—*Macbeth*—*Hamlet*—*Rob Roy*, &c. fall; this is a misfortune in most provincial theatres, which for want of numbers cannot be avoided. The *Lady Duberly* of Mrs. OLD, was a very clever performance, and called forth the approbation she merited; she is a very spirited actress, and in the walk she has made choice of in the drama (*viz.*) the Old Women, few will excel her; she is a young woman, and, with perseverance, will one day reap the harvest of her industry. Of Mrs. GRANT'S *Cicely Homespun*, those who have seen her before will acknowledge it could not be otherwise than excellent; this lady is seen to advantage every time she appears; she is invariably pleasing, and *Cicely Homespun* is her *chef-d'œuvre*; there is a natural gaiety of spirited liveliness in this lady's acting, which cannot fail to please in the sprightliness of comedy, whilst in characters of a more serious cast, the tear of sympathy never fails to trickle down the cheeks of her audience. The other characters in the comedy, though of an inferior cast, are nevertheless necessary, and were well supported. In the farce of the "*Agreeable Surprise*," we were again highly amused by the *Lingo* of PENSON, whose drolleries, whenever he appears, are sure to set his audience in a roar of laughter, and send them home in perfect good humour. MORTIMER was the *Sir Felix Friendly*, nor need we wish a better. That the audience were highly delighted with the rusticity and simplicity of *Cowslip*, it is only necessary to add, Mrs. GRANT played the part.

X. Q. W.

Lyminster, Nov. 1st, 1823.